

SÉANCE

by Daniel Curzon and John R. Newton

CHARACTERS (4)

- 1) MEDIUM, in her forties, very glamorous, very chic, a bit overdone, not a gypsy
- 2) TEEN GIRL, 15-19, wants to break her addiction to Social Media
- 3) MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, she is so scared and shy that nobody can understand what she wants.
- 4) YOUNG MAN, who wants to reach and hug his Grandpa one last time

SETTING: A dimly lit room suitable for a séance. Chairs for four people.

TIME: The present.

LIGHTS UP.

MEDIUM: Good evening. I am your spirit facilitator, Olga. I am genuine. I am not a stereotype. Thank you for agreeing to attend and watch our séance. Three others are expected to join us any minute now. I have not met them before, so I will be learning about their desires to contact, one person at a time, a Lost One. The three have been selected by lottery from the many hundreds who applied. I even had to turn down Elon Musk, who wanted so badly to attend. But there was no room. (She picks up two cymbals and bangs them together loudly) No room!

Do not be startled. I will not let the spirits harm you. On the other hand, do not offend the spirits or who knows what may happen. The spirits do not like gigglers! They do not like haters. Take your hate somewhere else! I can smell some hate coming from out there. (Points to audience) (Sniffs.) Yes, hate. We have not even begun and yet there is hate. How can you expect to reach a Lost One if your hearts will not be open?

Are we ready to reach out for the Lost Ones? Claps hands.) Are we? (Encourages audience to clap.) That's a start.

Wait! I feel a presence – just off to the side there. (Points.)

LIGHTS UP on TEENAGE GIRL.

TEEN: (waves) Hello. Is this the right place?

MEDIUM: Come in. Come in.

(The TEEN enters the main stage.)

TEEN: (Looks at phone) You have excellent reviews on social media! I just had to come here and let you give me a reading to help me break my curse, my addiction to social media! I am a star online and my audience craves me; but it's taking a toll on me! You must help me!

MEDIUM: I most certainly will help you break this curse! One of your deceased relatives or ancestors, or dead friends put it on you! Since you are here for a séance I can help you break free from your addiction, for a small price.

TEEN: I'll do anything! (Stares and smiles at YOUNG MAN who enters).

YOUNG MAN: I booked a session with the Medium, as I saw her on YouTube and I want to see my grandfather again and hug him. (to TEEN) Hey, aren't you that lady from YouTube that teaches people recipes and gives life advice? I didn't expect to see you here! Will you live stream our séance?

TEEN: (Hesitates) Well, I was hoping to take a break from social media, but do you think people would want to see it? Streaming it will not hurt my audience and followers expect me to show my entire life! Are you on social media? I can make you a star! (takes out phone and begins streaming)

YOUNG MAN: (bemused but not mocking) Me? A star? What do I have to do? I hope it doesn't entail my family's secret about my grandfather. I miss him and I want to see him one last time!

TEEN: (intrigued) A family secret? What is it? You can tell me! I won't tell anyone! I promise! Is it about hidden money or a buried treasure?

YOUNG MAN: (hesitating) How did you know? Are you also telepathic or a medium?

TEEN: (pleading) Tell me what it is! Or think about it and the Medium will pick it up via her telepathy! I want to show my viewers that séances are real and worth the price! (Checks phone) We've already got some viewers now! We're about to reveal a treasure!

YOUNG MAN: But I don't know where it is. Only my grandfather did, but he died before he could tell me. That's why I came here to hug him, talk to him one last time, and find out maybe where he hid his money. (glances at entrance)

(MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN enters stage and takes a seat, nervously.)

MEDIUM: Oh, our third seeker is with us! I see that you have taken a seat.

WOMAN: (in a whisper) Yes.

MEDIUM: And your name is?

WOMAN: (whispering) Yes.

MEDIUM: Your name is Yes?

WOMAN: (whispering) I want to be positive.

MEDIUM: We all do. No more spooky seances. Just light and positivity!

TEEN: Not even a little bit spooky? My followers like a little spooky.

MEDIUM: We'll see, my dear. (to the WOMAN)) What brings you here, my dear?
Oh, I rhymed!

WOMAN: (whispering) I'm scared.

MEDIUM No need to be scared. (loudly) BOO!

(The WOMAN falls on the floor.)

MEDIUM: Nobody move. She can help herself!

WOMAN: (whispering) I'm afraid to get up.

MEDIUM: No, you're not!

WOMAN: (whispering) Yes, I am.

MEDIUM: Okay, stay there.

WOMAN; (whispering) I will.

MEDIUM: I have just one bit of advice for you down there on the floor.

WOMAN: (whispering) What?

MEDIUM: (whispering) Boo! Hah, ha, got you! See, you're less frightened already.

WOMAN: (whispering) No, I'm not!

MEDIUM: Why don't you tell us whom you wish to make contact with?

WOMAN: (whispering) I don't know the name.

MEDIUM: We'll work around it.

WOMAN: (whispering) Or what sex.

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MEDIUM: We do either, even nonbinary or asexual.

WOMAN: Do you take Venmo? (Searches purse.)

MEDIUM: We'll worry about payments later. Let's see if we can hone in on what this lady wants. Okay?

TEEN: I know! I have a feeling she wants to get off social media but can't!

WOMAN: (whispering) I don't use any social media.

TEEN: The telephone?

WOMAN: (whispering) They're all spam calls.

YOUNG MAN: I know! She wants to get in touch with her sweet old grandfather with a secret.

WOMAN: I don't have a grandfather. Or I never knew him. He died before I was born.

YOUNG MAN: (whispering to TEEN) Are you streaming this? It will get you more viewers! What do you think her secret is?

TEEN (whispering to YOUNG MAN): I don't know but I hope we and the Medium can find out!

WOMAN (whispering to self): What did I do to get into this mess? I don't care about social media.

MEDIUM (loud and clear): Okay everyone! It's time to begin! Normally we would all be seated at the table but as long as you can all hold hands it will work! Everyone grab hands with the person next to you! (all characters do this even the TEEN and the YOUNG MAN grab opposite hands of the WOMAN).

TEEN: We are going to be so famous! I know I check my phone and social media 24 hours a day even going without sleep, food, and water but it's worth it! Maybe I shouldn't change after all!

YOUNG MAN (to TEEN): That's devotion! I haven't heard of that devotion except among the Roman Catholic saints and martyrs, and the Virgin Mary herself! My grandfather got me into going to confession and Mass daily, and we would say the rosary together!

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MEDIUM (to all): Enough chatter! Everyone has to focus and call upon the spirits they want to communicate with! Concentrate and focus!

YOUNG MAN: Grandpa, here are you and where did you hide your money?

TEEN: To any spirits listening: break me free from social media! I just want to be famous and worshipped by everyone!

WOMAN: (whispering to self) Where am I?! I thought I was crazy!

MEDIUM: Keep concentrating. We cannot break the portal to the spirit world I am creating! Don't stop! I'm almost there! I can hear and sense them! Don't make them break off the connection!

TEEN: I can't wait! I will get so many sponsors for ads online with my streaming videos! I won't care how addicted I am!

YOUNG MAN: Where are you, Grandpa? Give me a sign!

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: Grandson, is that you?

YOUNG MAN: Yes it's me! Can you see me? Can you give me a hug and also tell me where you hid your money?

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: Grandson, it's me, Grandpa!

TEEN: What about mt spirit?!

YOUNG MAN: My Grandpa showed up first. Back off!

TEEN: I will not!

WOMAN (whispering): How can I get out of this hellhole?

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: Speak to me, Grandson!

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YOUNG MAN: I love you, Grandpa, but I need some money! Where did you hide your will?

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: In a box that is large, blue, and full of broken fragments!

YOUNG MAN: I never saw anything like this at your house. Which sort of broken fragments?

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: (as a cat) HiiiSss! Mee-OW!

TEEN: He hid the will and money in a cat litter box!

YOUNG MAN: Is it in a bag of clean litter, or in the bin full of dirty litter?

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: Good question. I'm signing off.

YOUNG MAN: Wait. Please don't go. Do I have to look through used litter?

WOMAN: This is some kind of timeshare sales presentation!

TEEN: Now it's my turn! Spirits and entities please make me wealthy and famous from my YouTube and Tik Tok videos but rid me of my addiction to social media. I can have it all!

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: Sorry it does not work this way. You have to ask a specific question of the spirit instead!

TEEN: Will I be rich and famous? I want it more than anything in the world! Is that clear?

SPIRIT VOICE OF MEDIUM: I think we all understand that! But no, and no.

TEEN: What? Why not? I'm streaming this and have a million viewers! It's climbing to a billion!

WOMAN: (whispering) I think that's my missing daughter! What a coincidence! I gave her up for adoption twenty years ago!

SPIRIT VOICE of MEDIUM: Now it's this woman's turn.

WOMAN (whispering): I want to know what I did to deserve a daughter that thinks the Internet is more important than finding out who her biological mother is? Do I really want to find this daughter?

WOMAN (crying and screaming to TEEN): It's true you are my daughter! Take a DNA test!

TEEN (to MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN): Who is my father? Maury Povich?

YOUNG MAN: I am! (to MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN) Where's my money? You told me when we met on the Internet you wanted a sperm donor and would pay me money! I was sixteen then and we met up and you got pregnant but you never paid! Now I am desperate for money. Pay me now!

TEEN: You're my father? I don't believe this!

YOUNG MAN: Yes, we're your long-lost parents!

TEEN: But you're so ordinary!

MEDIUM (to MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN): Now it's your turn to ask a spirit a question!

TEEN: Prove you are my father!

YOUNG MAN: I don't have a DNA test on me.

TEEN: Well, I do! You never know when you might need one. (Searches her things) Here it is!

YOUNG MAN: It looks used. I'm not putting that in my mouth.

TEEN: Oh, yes, you are! (Chases him with the swab.)

YOUNG MAN: Cease and desist!

TEEN: Once I know for sure if you're my father or not, I can decide if I want to know you.

YOUNG MAN: You're the spitting image of me!

TEEN: Spit on this swab!

YOUNG MAN: You'll probably just live stream it to your fans!

TEEN: What a great idea! Stop and spit!

WOMAN: I won't participate in this low-brow Jerry Springer travesty!

TEEN: What's low-brow mean?

MEDIUM: Wait! Wait! Everybody just cool down. I have a message from Grandpa on the other side. Let's listen to what Grandpa has to say. Shall we?

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SPIRIT VOICE of MEDIUM: Am I getting through all that noise down there? Hello! Hello!

MEDIUM: Yes, you are. This is me, Olga. I think the connection is clear. Speak, spirit, speak!

SPIRIT VOICE: First, I want to speak to the teenage girl.

TEEN: What is it you want to say to me?

SPIRIT: You're not the only person in the world. And, no, you can't have everything you want.

TEEN: Who says?

SPIRIT: Me, common sense.

TEEN: What's that?

SPIRIT: It's there somewhere in your head.

TEEN: You're just trying to make me old, like you!

SPIRIT: It may be too late, but I have great hope for you and your common sense.

TEEN: You can't make me have common sense!

SPIRIT: We're in a play. I can too. Zap!

TEEN: What's that feeling I'm feeling?

SPIRIT: It's called common sense. Isn't it better?

TEEN: It's sort of boring.

SPIRIT: Good! It will feel better and better. Less yearning.

TEEN: It's so boring, I'm falling asleep.

SPIRIT: Once the common sense kicks in fully, you'll be a whole new person.

TEEN: That will be okay. As long as I can live-stream it!

YOUNG MAN: What about my Grandpa's money, his treasure?

SPIRIT: Do you really think you're going to get your Grandpa's treasure via a séance?

YOUNG MAN: Why not?

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SPIRIT: Hidden in a cat's litter box, either clean or dirty? Really?

YOUNG MAN: Well, I . . .

SPIRIT: Really?

YOUNG MAN: No, I guess not.

SPIRIT: Good.

SPIRIT: Now I want to speak with the mom and dad.

WOMAN/YOUNG MAN: Us?

SPIRIT: You became parents in a rather unorthodox manner, it would seem.

YOUNG MAN: Yes, this woman made off with my sperm!

WOMAN: And then I lost track of my daughter until now.

SPIRIT: Mere details. What matters is that you all found each other, warts and all? Is it not?

YOUNG MAN: Easy for you to say.

SPIRIT: Each of you has only a very limited time in this realm.

YOUNG MAN: (sarcastic) How profound.

SPIRIT: Sarcasm aside, it *is* profound. I give you seventy-five years. The mother of your child, eighty-two. Your daughter, fifty-nine.

TEEN: Hey!

SPIRIT: Make the most of it. I cannot offer you false hopes. Goodbye. (Sound of a gunshot.)

TEEN: Did the spirit kill himself?!

MEDIUM: Shit! There goes my business.

BLACKOUT